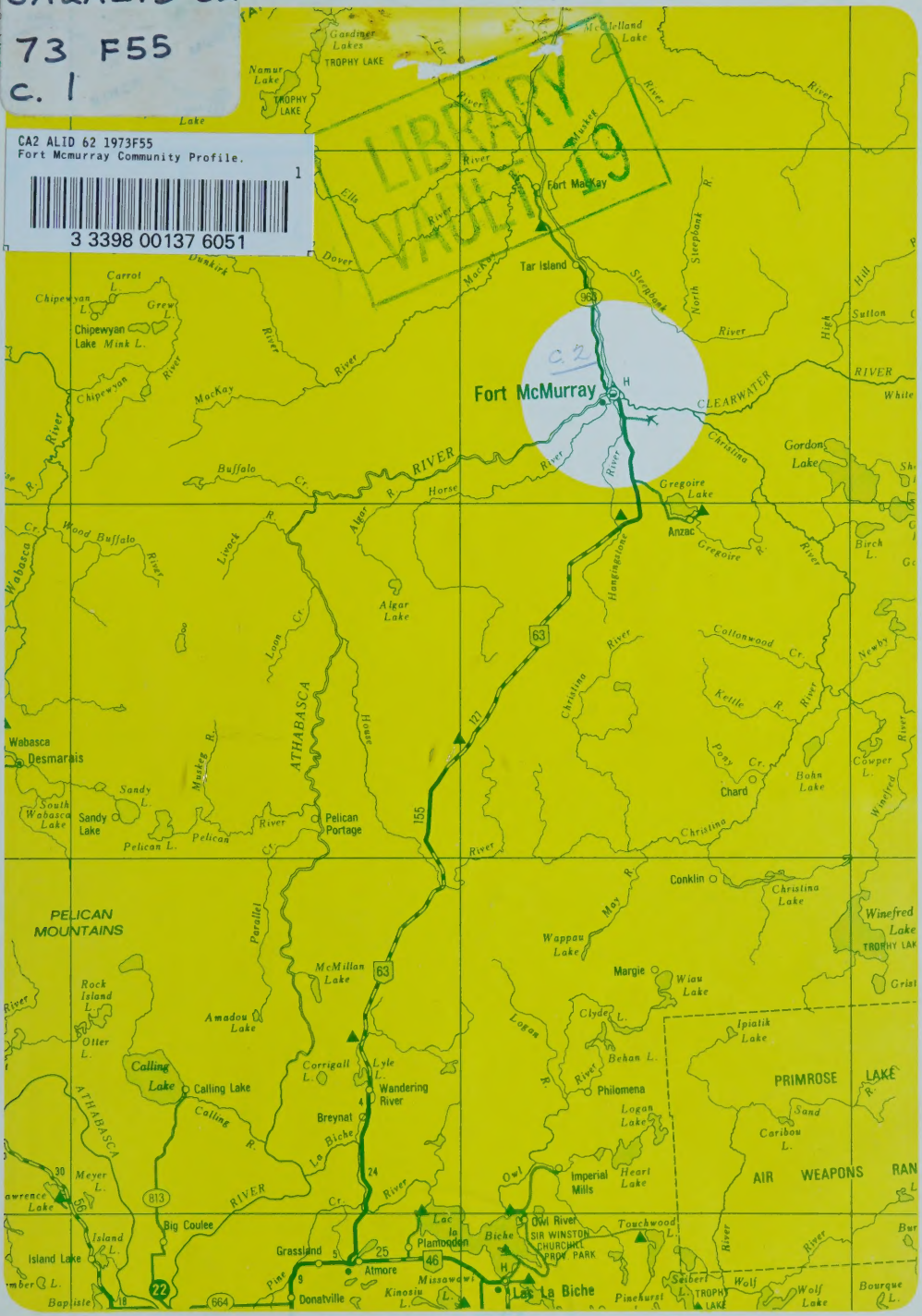
CA2ALID 62
73 F55
c. 1

CA2 ALID 62 1973F55
Fort Mcmurray Community Profile.
1
3 3398 00137 6051

LIBRARY
VAULT 13

FORT McMURRAY


Fort McMurray
Fort MacKay
Tar Island
Anzac
Gregoire Lake
Gordon Lake
Chipewyan Lake
Mink L.
Carrot L.
Grew L.
Dunkirk
Dover
Buffalo
Horse
Algar Lake
Wood Buffalo
Wabasca
Desmarais
Sandy Lake
South Wabasca Lake
Pelican Portage
Pelican L.
Pelican
Loon Cr.
Livock R.
Muskeg R.
Hangingstone
Christina River
Collanwood Cr.
Kettle R.
Pony Cr.
Chard
Bohn Lake
Cowper L.
Birch L.
Newby
Winefred
Conklin
Christina Lake
Winefred Lake
TROPHY LAKE
Wappau Lake
Margie
Wiau Lake
Clyde L.
Ipiatik Lake
PRIMROSE LAKE
AIR WEAPONS RAN
Behan L.
Philomena
Logan Lake
Sand
Caribou L.
Imperial Mills
Heart Lake
Owl River
SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL PROV. PARK
Touchwood L.
Seibert L.
Wolf
Wolf Lake
Bourque L.
Pinehurst L.
TROPHY LAKE
Lac la Biche
Plamondon
Kinosiu L.
Missawawi
Atmore
Grassland
Donatville
Baptiste
Big Coulee
Island Lake
Island L.
Meyer L.
Lawrence Lake
Calling Lake
Calling L.
Calling R.
Breynat
Wandering River
Corrigall L.
Lyle L.
McMillan Lake
Amadou Lake
Rock Island L.
Otter L.
Parallel
PELICAN MOUNTAINS
ATHABASCA
RIVER
Gardiner Lakes
TROPHY LAKE
Namur Lake
McClelland Lake
Muskeg
Sleepbank
North Sleepbank
Hill
Sutton
High
RIVER
White
CLEARWATER
Christina
Algar R.
Livock R.
Loon Cr.
Muskeg R.
Hangingstone
Ella
Mackay
Chipewyan
Wood Buffalo
Wabasca
Logan R.
May R.
Owl
Touchwood L.
Lac la Biche
Plamondon
Kinosiu L.
Missawawi
Pine
Sand
Caribou L.
Wolf
Wolf Lake
Bourque L.
Pinehurst L.
Seibert L.
TROPHY LAKE
Island Lake
Island L.
Meyer L.
Lawrence Lake
Calling Lake
Calling L.
Calling R.
Breynat
Wandering River
Corrigall L.
Lyle L.
McMillan Lake
Amadou Lake
Rock Island L.
Otter L.
Parallel
Grassland
Donatville
Baptiste
Big Coulee
Atmore
Imperial Mills
Heart Lake
Owl River
SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL PROV. PARK
Touchwood L.
Behan L.
Philomena
Logan Lake
Sand
Caribou L.
PRIMROSE LAKE
AIR WEAPONS RAN
Ipiatik Lake
Clyde L.
Margie
Wiau Lake
Conklin
Christina Lake
Winefred Lake
TROPHY LAK
Wappau Lake
Chard
Bohn Lake
Cowper L.
Birch L.
Newby
Winefred
Collanwood Cr.
Kettle R.
Pony Cr.
Christina River
Hangingstone
Gregoire Lake
Anzac
Gordon Lake
Sutton
High
RIVER
White
CLEARWATER
Christina
Algar R.
Livock R.
Loon Cr.
Muskeg R.
Wood Buffalo
Wabasca
Buffalo
Horse
Algar Lake
Chipewyan Lake
Mink L.
Carrot L.
Grew L.
Dunkirk
Dover
Ella
Mackay
Fort MacKay
Tar Island
Sleepbank
North Sleepbank
Hill
Namur Lake
Gardiner Lakes
TROPHY LAKE
McClelland Lake
Muskeg
Wabasca
Desmarais
Sandy Lake
South Wabasca Lake
Pelican Portage
Pelican L.
Pelican
Loon Cr.
Livock R.
Muskeg R.
Hangingstone
Christina River
Collanwood Cr.
Kettle R.
Pony Cr.
Chard
Bohn Lake
Cowper L.
Birch L.
Newby
Winefred
Conklin
Christina Lake
Winefred Lake
TROPHY LAK

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026 with funding from
Legislative Assembly of Alberta - Alberta Legislature Library

FORT McMURRAY COMMUNITY PROFILE

January 1, 1973

AN INTRODUCTION

Location

Fort McMurray is located between the 56th and 57th parallel, approximately 40 miles west of the Saskatchewan border and 274 road miles from Edmonton. The town is situated at the junction of the Clearwater and Athabasca rivers.

Population

The community's rapid population growth in recent years is shown in the following census figures:

1955	926
1956	1,103
1961	1,181
1964	1,303
1965	2,515
1966	3,387
1967	4,948
1968	5,943
1969	6,132
1970	6,684
1971	7,146
1972	8.148

History

Because of its location, Fort McMurray played an important role in the history and development of the north. Early explorers and fur traders using the routes to the north, of the Clearwater and Athabasca Rivers, passing by the site of Fort McMurray, were Peter Pond, Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, and supply parties from Franklin's expeditions. In 1788 the North West Company established a trading post, which was across the Clearwater from the present site of Fort McMurray, later abandoned, and called it Fort of the Forks.

Almost 100 years later, in 1870, H. J. Moberly founded Fort McMurray on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company. He named the fort after an old friend, J. D. McMurray, who was a partner in the original North West Company. Building was started at the new fort in mid-May in a foot of snow; in the second year the entire settlement was destroyed by fire caused by a keg of gunpowder being set off by a mosquito smudge pot. Mr. Moberly and men rebuilt the fort, only to have it completely flooded out in 1875. The new fort had been established in order to help utilize the supply route up the Churchill River across the twelve mile Meythe Portage in Saskatchewan, down the Clearwater to its junction with the Athabasca River, and so to the north.

In the early 1920's the Alberta and Great Waterways Railroad (now Northern Alberta Railways) was built to Waterways, slightly southeast of McMurray, and all freight to the north was transferred from trains to barges at Waterways, which made it a bustling community during the summer months.

On May 6, 1947, Fort McMurray was incorporated as a village and on December 29, 1948, it was proclaimeda town.

Weather

Comparison with Edmonton and Calgary

	Temperature		Jan. Mean Daily		July Mean Daily	
	Lowest	Highest	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.
Fort McMurray	-59	96	4	-16	76	48
Edmonton	-57	99	15	-2	74	52
Calgary	-49	97	24	4	75	49

	Mean Annual Rain	Mean Annual Snowfall	Total Precipitation
Fort McMurray	11.85 in.	64 in.	16.85 in.
Edmonton	13.25 in.	54 in.	18.64 in.
Calgary	11.59 in	59 in.	17.44 in

	Period yrs. Frost Data Collected	Mean Date Last In Spring	Mean Date First In Fall	Frost Free Period Mean Days	Frost Free Period Longest Days	Frost Free Period Shortest Days
Fort McMurray	17 yrs.	June 19	Aug. 19	60	115	8
Edmonton	23 yrs.	May 18	Sept. 19	123	156	88
Calgary	30 yrs.	May 27	Sept. 11	106	154	42

LIVING ACCOMMODATION

Apartments: Lunar (24 suites); Hillside Manor (30); Peter Pond (3 units — 72 suites); Woodland (22); Athabasca (22); Birchwood (22).

Private Single Residences: Serviced lots available with Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation loans.

Mobile Home Subdivision: Ptarmigan Park is one of the most modern mobile home subdivisions in Western Canada. Developed by Athabasca Realty Ltd., it has paved streets, underground wiring and each lot is sodded with a paved driveway. Most of the 241 units house employees of Great Canadian Oil Sands.

Trailer Parks: Park Plaza has 162 stalls, Ken's has 35. Because of the shortage of trailer stalls, there are a large number of temporary permits granted for trailers on undeveloped lots. The Alberta Housing Corporation is planning three large additional courts to accommodate the pressing need.

The town has 15.8 miles of paved streets; 14.5 miles gravelled; and 28 miles of sidewalks.

Ptarmigan Park, mobile home subdivision.

Modern homes touch the woodlands.

ADMINISTRATION

Civic Government

Fort McMurray recieved "New Town" status on June 30, 1964. The town is governed by a seven-man board, chairman elected by the board from among its members. Six members of the board are elected by civic electors.

Decisions of the governing board are carried out by the municipal employees: a manager, secretary-treasurer, superintendent of public works, inspection officer, superintendent of recreation and parks, eight clerical staff and 37 outside staff.

Tax Structure

The total revenue of the town in 1971 was $1,888,328.00, $898,274.00 of which was obtained by tax levy; $499,206.00 from government grants, and the balance of rentals, licenses, service charges and miscellaneous, totalling $491,849.00, leaving a total revenue of $1,889,328.00. Capital and loan fund expenditures amounted to $875,720.00.

The current mill rate for Fort McMurray is 82; this includes 41.5 for schools. Value of properties exempt from taxation in 1971 amounted to $3,169,110.

Building permit values for the last six years: 1966 - $2,794,653; 1967 - $5,728,-783.99; 1968 - $3,250,444.69; 1969 - $1,032,955; 1970 - $1,894,986; 1971 - $2,957,615. 1972 - $7,805,546.

New subdivision features crescents with centre park.

Housing under construction.

Civic Centre is hub of town administrative activity.

PROTECTIVE AND UTILITY SERVICES

Law Enforcement

The town is policed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police under contract and presently have one sergeant and seven members. The town also provides two stenographers and night guards. The rural detachment of the R.C.M.P. staffed by three officers, one corporal and two constables, who are responsible for the policing of the rural areas.

Fire Protection

Fire protection is offered by a 24-man volunteer brigade operating two fire trucks. There are 90 hydrants and the fire mains are 6 and 8 inches. Operating cost of the department in 1971 was $21,247.

Water

The town's water supply is from the Athabasca River and is held in a 15 million gallon capacity reservoir. Fluoride and chlorine are both added to the water supply with the capacity 500,000 gallons storage of treated water.

Sewer and Water Main Mileage

Sewer connections total 1500 residential and 70 business and total 17.3 miles. There are three separate sewer systems each with its own lagoon system.

Electric Power

Power is generated by the Alberta Power Co. from their local generating plant. There are approximately 60 miles of underground wiring and 30 miles of overhead wiring.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is distributed by Northland Utilities Ltd. who receive their supply from Albersun Gas and Oil Ltd. whose fields are in the Lac La Biche and Calling Lake areas. Winter consumption amounts to between 5 and 6 million cubic feet per day and there is 65 miles of gas line within the town.

Yarding boat on the Clearwater at Fort McMurray.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Fort McMurray General Hospital District No. 99 administers a 54 bed modern hospital. A staff consists of 4 resident doctors, administrator, business manager, director of nursing, and 55 full time staff as well as 21 part time staff. This hospital has the services of the electric cardiogram data send hookup to the cardiac institute in Edmonton as well as x-ray equipment, laboratory and a physio-therapy section.

Municipal Nursing Service: This service has three public health nurses and one office staff. They provide nursing services to the settlements of Conklin, Janvier, Fort McKay and Anzac.

Family Counselling: The Preventative Social Service Director acts as supervisor of the family counselling. There is a counselling psychologist coming to Fort McMurray every two weeks to provide technical advice to the ten lay counsellors.

Fort McMurray General Hospital serves community's health needs.

Gymnasium at Alberta Vocational School.

EDUCATION

Peter Pond School for both senior and junior high students.

Fort McMurray has two school districts, Fort McMurray School District No. 2833 and Fort McMurray Separate School District No. 32.

The Fort McMurray School District No. 2833 administers the Peter Pond High School (Junior and Senior) and also the Dr. K. A. Clark Elementary School. The Dr. Clark Elementary has twenty-four classrooms with the addition of six portables to provide classes from Grade I - VI. Staff consists of 24 teachers and the 1971 - 1972 enrollment was 809.

The Junior High School of the Peter Pond provide Grades VII - IX and had an enrollment of 339 pupils (1971 - 1972). The senior section provides for Grades X - XII with 244 pupils registered in the 1971 - 1972 year. The Peter Pond School has 31 classrooms and employs 34 teaching staff.

Fort McMurray Separate School District #32 has the J. A. Turcotte and St. John's Schools. Turcotte provides Grades I - V with 20 rooms and employs 24 teachers with a registration of 515 during the year 1971 - 1972. St. John's School provides for Grades VI to IX with twelve rooms and twelve teachers carrying a registration of 265 pupils during the year 1971 - 1972. St. John's is presently rebuilding their school building.

The Alberta Vocational Centre: The Alberta Vocational Centre is a provincial institution operating under the Department of Advanced Education. The purpose of the centre is to provide training and retraining for adults disadvantaged for social, economic, educational and/or physical disability to enable them to become productive members of the labor force; to serve the needs of the citizens of the community by providing continuing educational programs to provide special training for industrial employees as required by industry. They also provide trainee upgrading for tradesmen who are qualified and experienced and wish to gain journeymen status in a special field.

Approximately 50% of the trainees are sponsored by Canada Manpower. Other referral agencies include the Department of Advanced Education, Health and Social Development, Attorney General's Department, Indian Affairs and local industry. The present staff is 85 - 32 of which are instructors.

ACTIVITIES AND RECREATION

The town owns and operates a skating arena, a community center and an undercover swimming pool. There is also a curling rink which is owned by the Oil Sands Curling Club, and is located adjacent to the arena from which they share a common freezing plant for artificial ice. The curling rink has four sheets of ice.

Swimming Pool: This is a modern indoor swimming pool which was opened in April 1971. It has a 25 meter pool with the width of 10.6 meters and depth varying from one meter to a little over 1.5 meters. There is a separate diving tank — 30 x 35 feet and depth varying from 9 to 12 feet. The swimming pool is opened on a year round basis, with a permanent staff.

Other facilities available to the residents of Fort McMurray include: Mistie-Sepee Ski Club, Miskanaw Golf Club, Tennis Court, and Gregoire Lake Provincial Park.

Following is a list of clubs and organizations in Fort McMurray.

Al-Anon
All Saints Anglican Parish Guild
Baptist Youth Fellowship
Brownies
Catholic Women's League
Civil Service Association
Clearwater Ladies' Fastball League
Cosmopolitan Club
Elks

Catholic Church features modern design.

Fort McMurray Badminton Club
Fort McMurray Figure Skating Club
Fort McMurray Minor Baseball League
Fort McMurray Senior Hockey League
Fort McMurray Tennis Club
Girls' Club (Baptist Church)
Girl Guides
Junior Forest Wardens
Kinette Club
Knights of Columbus
Miskanaw Golf Club
Nistawoyou Association
Indian-Eskimo Assoc. of Canada
Junior High School Girls' Club (Baptist Church)

Baptist Church in picturesque setting.

Recreational facilities include indoor swimming pool.

Kinsmen Club
Ladies' Order of the Royal Purple
Lions Club
Mistie-Sepee-Ski Club
Open Stage Society
People's Park (Youth Club)
Royal Canadian Legion
Saint Aidens Women's Auxiliary - Anglican
Tar Island Ladies
Army Cadets
Fort McMurray Art Club
Boy Scouts
Candy Stripers
Chamber of Commerce
Clearwater Boxing Club
Clearwater Light Horse and Rodeo Association
Cubs
Fish & Game Association
Fort McMurray Basketball League
Fort McMurray Men's Fastball League
Fort McMurray Soccer League
Fort McMurray Sno-Trakkers
Fort McMurray Minor Hockey League
Guide Association
Oilsands Curling Club
Overture Concert Society
Peter Pond High School Students' Union
Skating
Swimming
Teen-Time (Youth Group)

BUSINESSES AND SERVICES

Government Offices

Municipal: Fort McMurray Civic Centre (municipal office); the 12,500-book library is now housed in rented space.

Provincial: Accommodation is provided for provincial, family, juvenile, small claims, and Canadian citizenship courts; Alberta Vocational Centre, Department of Health and Social Development, Alberta Forest Service, Department of Public Works, Fish and Wildlife Branch, and Attorney General's Department — adult probation.

Federal: Department of Transport, Airport, Canada Post Office, Department of Northern Development and Indian Affairs, Inland Water Branch, Water Surveys Branch, Canada Manpower.

Financial Facilities

The Royal Bank of Canada, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Bank of Nova Scotia and Toronto Dominion Bank are established with branches in Fort McMurray.

Business Establishments

A total of 141 business licenses were issued in 1971. The Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce represents its business members. There is also a Fort McMurray Retail Merchants Association which represents a section of the businesses. Businesses currently operating in Fort McMurray are as follows:

Accountant	1
Airlines	2
Appliances & Radio Stores	1
Auto Body Shop	2
Bakery	1
Barber Shops	3
Beauty Parlors	4
Building Contractors	5
Clothing Store — Family	3
Clothing Store — Men's	2
Car Rental Services	4
Concrete Redi-Mix	1
Dairy	1
Dentist	2
Doctors	4
Drive-In Restaurant	2
Drug Stores	2
Dying, Cleaning & Laundry	4
Electrical Shops	3
Electricians	2
Entertainment	1
Florist	1
Fuel Oil Dealers	3
Furniture Store	1
Garage & Filling Stations	6
General Contractors	1
General Trucking Firms	1
Grocery Stores	5
Hardware Stores	3
Hotels, Motels, Cabins	3
Household Movers	1
Jewellery Stores	1
Land Surveyor	1
Lawyers	2
Lumber & Building Supplies	1
Lumber Mill Operators	2
Motor Vehicle Dealer	2
Newspaper	1
Oilfield Equipment & Service	1
Insurance & Real Estate	6
Liquid Gas & Appliances	1
Optometrists (visiting)	2
Outboard Sales & Service	1
Plumbing & Heating	2
Poultry Farm	1
Refrigeration & Applicances	1
Restaurants	4
Rubber Products (incl. tires)	1
Second Hand Store	1
Shoe Store	1
Sporting Goods Store	1
Stationery & Office Supplies	1
Taxi Cab Companies	5
Tobacco & News Stores	2
Travel Agencies	1
Welding Repair Shop	2

Hotels

Oil Sands Hotel — 30 rooms, cafeteria, beverage room and lounge.

Peter Pond Hotel — 86 double rooms with bath and shower, dining room, banquet room, restaurant, liquor lounge and beverage room.

Riviera Motor Hotel — 30 double rooms with bath and showers, dining room, banquet room, and liquor lounge.

TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATIONS

Transportation

Historically the main function of Fort McMurray was a transfer center between Edmonton and the settlements of the Northwest Territories which could be reached by water. This is no longer applicable as the bulk of northern freight is shipped via Hay River. Northern Transportation Co. supplies water services to Fort Chipewyan, Uranium City, Fon du Lac, Stony Rapids, Black Lake, Camsell Portage, Gunnar Docks and river points. They operate twenty-three barges and during 1971 transported 36,000 tons of freight.

Provincial Highway: In the spring of 1966, Highway 63 was opened as a gravelled highway with load restrictions thus connecting by road Fort McMurray with Edmonton and southern points. The distance from Fort McMurray to Edmonton via Highways 28,46 and 63 is approximately 274 miles. There still remains 85 miles of unpaved highway.

Bus Service: Greyhound Bus Lines under the name of Canadian Coachways operate daily buses from Fort McMurray to Edmonton.

Air Transportation: Pacific Western Airlines operate passenger and express service between Fort McMurray and Edmonton then on to Fort Chipewyan and Uranium City. This is a daily service with the exception of Saturday and Sunday.

Rail Transportation: Northern Alberta Railways operate two freight trains into Fort McMurray weekly which moves a great deal of the heavy industrial freight.

Highways Trucking: Pacific Western Trucking, a division of Pacific Western Airlines, provides a daily truck service from Edmonton. They will be building their own truck terminal at Fort McMurray.

Charter Aircraft: Contact Airways provide a charter aircraft service with the use of four Cessna 185's, three Piper Aztec aircraft. Three of the Cessna 185's are on floats or skis.

Communications

Radio - Fort McMurray has the service of a CBC repeater station, CBKF, bringing in the programming from the CBC station CBX in Edmonton, which has been in operation since 1968. There is also a CBC T.V. service which is a video tape transmission from the local transmitter providing service from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. each day, one week later than that shown in Edmonton.

Cable Vision: Alberta Broadcasting Corporation provides cable vision by transmitting full daily programming from CBC and CTV Edmonton, also the frontier package of the CBC and a local channel programmed by voluntary staff.

Newspaper: The McMurray Courier provides a local newspaper coverage on a weekly basis and is published and printed in Fort McMurray.

Radio - CJOK, Fort McMurray, 1230 KC, began broadcasting January 1, 1973.

Great Canadian Oil Sands plant.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Great Canadian Oil Sands Limited

Great Canadian Oil Sands Company was incorporated in 1953 for the purpose of extracting oil from tar sands at Fort McMurray. The company acquired leases from Fitzsimmons Company and from the Abasand Oils Ltd., two companies that had been in existence for a good many years. The company obtained a permit in 1962 to produce 31,500 barrels per day, which would increase to 45,000 barrels per day in 1964.

Bechtel Ltd. undertook construction of the G.C.O.S. plant, which was officially opened on September 30, 1967. For every two tons of sand, one barrel of oil is produced. A 16 in. pipeline to Edmonton is capable of moving in excess of 54,000 barrels per day.

On the basis of 45,000 barrels per day granted under the permit, 250 tons of sulphur are produced. The company has approximately 1400 employees engaged in the operation of the plant, and the maintenance contractor, Catalytic Construction, have a crew of approximately 400. Since 1968, Mannix Company Ltd. have had a sub-contract to remove overburden from the tar sands deposit and employ, on a seasonal basis, 50 to 100 men.

Natural gas was piped to the plant from a gas field near Lac La Biche in 1968, which at the same time gave the natural gas services to the town of Fort McMurray. Great Canadian Oil Sands at the present time have an investment of over 300 million dollars in their oil plant at Fort McMurray.

The operation of the Great Canadian Oil Sands Company plant has been instrumental in the expansion of the town of Fort McMurray into a model community of over 8,000 population, with modern shopping centres, schools paved streets, underground wiring, gas, etc. The town's $21 million dollar annual payroll is the envy of many other small business towns in Alberta.

Proposed Development of Tar Sands

In 1957-1958, Royalite of Canada began experimental work with the tar sands at Mildred Lake, until City Service Athabasca was formed in 1959, of a consortium of Imperial Oil Limited 30%; City Service Athabasca 30%; Atlantic Richfield Canada 30%; Gulf Canada Limited 10%.

The Pilot Plant operated at Mildred Lake until 1964, then moved to Edmonton. The name of the Company was changed to Syncrude on January 1, 1965.

Syncrude of Canada have obtained a permit for 120,000 barrels production per day and are now undertaking testing of a drag line operation before beginning construction of their plant in 1973. This project scheduled for completion in 1976 at an estimated cost of over two hundred million dollars. Alberta Power will be building the Power Plant at a cost of over one hundred million dollars. This mining operation will have an estimated permanent staff of over 1200 employees resulting in a population of between 13 and 14 thousand for Fort McMurray. Shell Canada are presently operating a pilot plant approximately 40 miles north of Fort McMurray and likewise Texaco of Canada are building their pilot plant near the airport. Amoco Explorations have a producing pilot plant south of Anzac using an Insitu process.

Lumber Industry

Lumbering is a secondary industry at Fort McMurray. Swanson's Lumber Co. Ltd. operates both a sawmill and planing mill. The sawmill has a capacity of 30,000,000 board feet per year and the modernized planing, plant has the same capacity. The Dry Kiln plant handles 16,000,000 board feet per year. This company employes approximately 85 staff members with 30 to 40 extra men during the logging season.

Swanson's Lumber Company operations.

TOWN OF FORT McMURRAY

enquiries.
should be directed to:

Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 1440,
Fort McMurray, Alberta.

DATE DUE

AUG 5 1986

LEGISLATURE LIBRARY
216 LEGISLATURE BUILDING
EDMONTON, ALBERTA

MAY 24 '74

McMURRAY COURIER